Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 15 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Certain characteristics of the high-velocity stream of process air used to attenuate the filaments are believed to degrade the quality of the collected nonwoven web. In one aspect, the high-velocity stream of process air exiting the venturis creates lateral vortices that travel down the confronting planar surfaces defining the slotted passageway and eventually exit the passageway outlet along with the filaments and high-velocity process air. The interaction of the lateral vortices with the descending filaments and the high-velocity of the stream of process air causes unpredictable variations in the looping of the filaments. As a result, localized areas of relatively low web density and relatively high web density ~~result~~ occur that ~~reduces~~ reduce the long range uniformity of the collected nonwoven web. This loss of uniformity may be undesirable for those end products intended to be fluid impervious, as the low-density areas define unacceptable leakage paths that defeat use as a barrier material.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 4 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Alternatively and with reference to Figs. 1-4 and 4A, the spunbonding apparatus 10 may also be configured for tailoring the strength of the nonwoven web 48. Specifically, the ACD may be adjusted to intentionally introduce stripes 67 of relatively high web density separated by stripes 69 of relatively low web density. The presence of the stripes 67, 69 results in an ~~isotropic~~

anisotropic machine to cross-machine direction (MD/CD) strength ratio, considered to be ~~isotropic~~ anisotropic for MD/CD strength ratios in the range of about 2:1 to 10:1. Generally, the striping occurs for an ACD that is less than twice the vertical dimension or length of the guides 60, 62 and increases with decreasing ACD. Compared with conventional guiding schemes, the action of the guides 60, 62 prevents the occurrence of random localized areas of relatively low web density and areas of relatively high web density in the nonwoven web. If striping is not desired, the ACD distance is selected such that filaments 24 guided by adjacent guides 60, 62 are more overlapping in the cross-machine direction, which produces isotropic MD/CD strength ratios of 1:1 to about 2:1. Generally, the ACD should be increased as the cross-machine dimension or transverse width of the guides 60, 62 is increased to prevent the occurrence of stripes of material having filament loops 48b.